

---

**Line of Inquiry: How does Ruth Asawa transform the ordinary in her public works at Union Square, Japantown and the Oakland Museum?**

**Guiding Questions:**

- How do everyday objects inspire/become art?
  - How does Ruth Asawa transform common materials in these works of art?
  - How does Ruth Asawa use the simple actions of stacking, folding, twisting and weaving in these works of art?
  - How do shape and scale influence space?
  - How do these works of art relate to their environment?
  - How do these works of art enhance/transform the community?
- 

**What do you SEE?**

- **SHAPE**  
Do you see shapes?  
Where do you see them?
- **LINE**  
What kinds of lines do you see? (i.e., straight, curves, etc.)  
Where do you see them?  
Can you trace the line with your finger?
- **TECHNIQUE**  
Do you see folding? (Stacking, weaving, twisting)  
Where do you see it?
- **PERSPECTIVE**  
How does it change if you look at it up close?  
Far away?  
Up high or down low?  
How is it different if you look at it from the other side?

**What do you HEAR?**

- **SOUND**  
What does it sound like?  
Does the sound change from a different vantage point?

**What do you THINK?**

- What does it make you think of?
- What images come to mind as a result of this viewing?

**What do you FEEL?**

- How does it make you feel?

Rooftop School / JMCA Institute Program / Session #1  
Ms. Callaway's 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Class  
Wednesday, January 28, 2004

LOI: *How is the transformation of the ordinary present in Ruth Asawa's work?*

GUIDING QUESTION: *How does Ruth Asawa use the common motions of twisting and folding in her work?*

MATERIALS: White paper / Black construction paper / 2 CD's

-----

At Desks:

**I THINK ABOUT TWISTING / FOLDING (5 Mins)** Close your eyes and think about things that are twisted, what are things that are twisted /have twists, can you show me some things in this room that are twisted

- draw the lines with your finger
- do it just w/ your hands, do it w/ your body/ etc.

In Circle:

**II TWISTING / FOLDING w/ BODIES (15 Mins)**

- 1) Twisting in pairs
- 2) Add-on twisting statue – bring in ½ the class / the other ½ observe where they see twisting (observe in different ways – big picture/ small pic hands)
- 3) Now sitting down, think about folding – what things are folded, where do you see folding in the classroom, show folding with your body – draw with finger 1<sup>st</sup>, then parts of body, then add whole body
- 4) Folding in pairs – bring in ½ the class / the other ½ draw quickly, rotate & observe drawings (1k for folding/twisting)

**III EXPLORE PAPER MEDIUM (5 Mins)**

- 1) Get in pairs- one person holds paper and describes to partner what it looks like, sounds like, feels like, makes you think of (GUIDE THRU /TOOLBOX)  
- Share out
- 2) Switch and other partner see all the things they can do with the paper (scrunch, fold, twist, tear, etc) / Take turns  
What does it feel like to tear, twist, etc.? What would you like to do but can't b/c its paper?  
- Share out

**IV TWISTING / FOLDING STATIONS (w/ music) (20 Mins)**

- 1) I'm going to ask ½ of you to twist, ½ to fold. I want you to make your own paper sculpture (show example)
- 2) ½ students at twisting station / ½ students at folding station
- 3) Give them black construction paper to display work upon, title it (write names!)
- 4) Rotate so the ½ who did twisting now do folding, vice versa
- 5) Give them black construction paper to display work upon, title it

**V MUSEUM THE WORK (10 Mins)**

- 1) Have students walk around the work w/ music, when music stops they:
  - Air-draw lines of work they're in front of (do twice) / Ask what they SEE
  - Make shapes with their hands of the shapes they see in work in front of them
  - Make shapes with their bodies of the shapes they see
  - Make body sculpture with several students from a work (do 3 or 4 times) / Have other students find shapes in statue, show with fingers

**VI REFLECTION**

- 1) How did it feel to make your folding sculpture?

- 2) How did it feel to make your twisting sculpture?
- 3) How did it feel to have your sculptures looked at?

Rooftop School / JMCA Institute Program / Session #2  
Ms. Callaway's 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Class  
Wednesday, February 4, 2004

LOI: *How is the transformation of the ordinary present in Ruth Asawa's work?*

GUIDING QUESTION: *How does Ruth Asawa use the common motions of weaving and stacking in her work?*

MATERIALS: Pipe cleaners / Foam core bases / 2 CD's

-----

At Desks:

**I THINK ABOUT WEAVING / STACKING (5 Mins)** (Eg. Stack 1<sup>st</sup>- do silently and ask what doing?)

Close your eyes and think about things that are stacked, what are things that are stacked on top of each other, can you show me some things in this room that are stacked

- do it just w/ your hands, do it w/ your body, partner, etc.

In Circle:

**II WEAVING / STACKING w/ BODIES (15 Mins)**

- 1) Stacking in pairs
- 2) Add-on stacking statue – bring in ½ the class / the other ½ observe where they see stacking & SHAPES (observe in different ways – big picture/ small pic hands)
- 3) Now sitting down, think about weaving – what things are woven, where do you see weaving in the classroom, show weaving with your body – draw with finger 1<sup>st</sup>, then parts of body, then add whole body
- 4) Weaving in pairs – bring in ½ the class / the other ½ observe, SEE SHAPES- Circle/Square/ Triangles, etc?

AND / OR (If time): WOVEN/STACKED BOPPITY BOP - Have students come up w/ 2 woven objects (made by 3 people) and 2 stacked objects (3 people)

**III EXPLORE PIPE CLEANER MEDIUM (5 Mins)**

- 1) Heads down, hands out, eyes closed just hold it in hands 1<sup>st</sup>. When I say go turn to neighbor and and describe what it looks like, sounds like, feels like, makes you think of (GUIDE THRU /TOOLBOX) / Take turns  
- Share out

- 2) Switch and other partner see all the things they can do with the pipe cleaners / Take turns

What does it feel like to bend, knot, etc.? What would you like to do but can't b/c its pipe cleaner?

- Share out

IF TIME OR IF FINISH EARLY: ADD TWISTING/FOLDING to sculpture

**IV STACKING / WEAVING STATIONS (w/ music) (20 Mins)**

- 1) Make stacking sculpture w/ pipe cleaner (show example)
- 2) Attach work to bases (write names!)
- 3) Now make weaving sculpture and attach to same base – How work that in their piece

**V MUSEUM THE WORK (10 Mins)**

- 1) Have students walk around the work w/ music, when music stops they:
  - Ask what they SEE
  - Make SHAPES with their hands of the SHAPES they see in work in front of them
  - Make SHAPES with their bodies of the SHAPES they see
  - Make body sculpture with several students from a work (do 3 or 4 times) / Have other students find shapes in statue, show with fingers

## **VI REFLECTION**

- 1) How did it feel to make your stacked sculpture?
- 2) How did it feel to make your woven sculpture?
- 3) How did it feel to have your sculptures looked at?

Rooftop School / JMCA Institute Program / Session #3  
Ms. Callaway's/ Ms. Beaulieu's 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Class  
Wednesday, February 11, 2004

LOI: *How is the transformation of the ordinary present in Ruth Asawa's work?*

GUIDING QUESTION: *How does Ruth Asawa use the common motions of weaving and stacking in her work?*

MATERIALS: Baker's clay ingredients / Tin foil / 2 buckets of water / 2 CD's

---

At Desks:

**I FAVORITE SF PLACE (15 Mins)**

*Get journals out*

- 1) Close eyes and think about a favorite place of yours around SF (could be in your own neighborhood)
  - What does it look like- close-up & faraway / What sound like / If reached hand out – what feel like, smells, etc. (2 mins)
- 2) Turn and talk to neighbor, sharing descriptions (3 mins)
- 3) Pull out journals (5 mins):
  - write 1 sentence to describe this
  - Draw a picture of it / or symbol of it (what represents the place)
- 4) Make it w/ your bodies and help of partner(s) (5 mins)

**II MAKE BAKER'S CLAY (5 Mins)**

- 1) Each table gets bowl w/ dry ingredients and wet ingredients to make the clay
- 2) Have everybody stir, etc./ participate in making the clay
- 3) As they are doing this, pass out tin foil

**III DOUGH SCULPTURES (15-20 Mins)**

- 1) What does the clay feel like, play w/ it for a minute, share w/ neighbor what it feels like. Share out
- 2) Now thinking of your favorite place in SF make a sculpture with that place in mind (don't have to make a sculpture of the place, can do representation- eg. baseball for Pac Bell park, turtle for mermaid fountain @ Ghir. Square
- 3) Put sculptures together, where does it fit, what do you want to put it next to?
- 4) Museum the work- What to you SEE / HEAR / THINK / FEEL?
- 5) Reflection- How did it feel to make? See others work?

*IF TIME:*

Choose a few and make with our bodies- 1<sup>st</sup> tableau style, then from action going into tableau.

**CLEAN UP! (5-10 Mins)**

Rooftop School / JMCA Institute Program / Session #3  
Ms. Callaway's/ Ms. Beaulieu's 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Class  
Wednesday, February 11, 2004

LOI: *How is the transformation of the ordinary present in Ruth Asawa's work?*

GUIDING QUESTION: *How does Ruth Asawa create a piece that mimics nature with man-made materials?*

MATERIALS: Leaves, branches & stones / Butcher paper / Tin foil / Rolls of tape/ staplers / Polaroid camera / Blue crepe paper?

-----

**I SURVEYING CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT (10-15 Mins)**

- 1) Review twisting/folding/weaving/ stacking – make a couple of sculptures with bodies
- 2) Now look around the room, where would you want to make your sculpture? If you were a fountain with water flowing, where would the water flow from? (Make a few body sculptures with someone showing where water flows.)
- 3) Look around the room- what are the best places in the room to have a fountain sculpture & why, brainstorm list of places
- 4) Take “before” pictures of each place w/ Polaroid camera

**II CREATING ENVIRONMENT SCULPTURES (20 Mins)**

- 1) Ms. B./ Ms. C divide class into groups of four (?) – assign to different areas we brainstormed in the room
- 2) Check out your space
- 3) One group at a time choose from the offered ingredients to make your fountain sculpture (paper, foil, stones, branches)
- 4) Add blue crepe paper “water” to your fountain. Where would the water flow?
- 5) Accent your fountain - How would you bring more attention to your fountain sculpture? What point of view would you want people to look at it from, how would you accent it to make people look that way? Entice people to come there? Eg. stone path, etc.

**III TALK ABOUT SCULPTURES (15-20 Mins)**

- 1) Go to each work & observe. What do you SEE / HEAR / THINK / FEEL?
- 2) Each group talk about fountain sculpture: why did you choose the materials, to make it the size you did, the ways to draw attention to your fountain (environment accents). How did it feel to make it? TAKE PICS of each group with their fountain.
- 3) Ask everyone, what did it do to that space? How was this part of the room changed (both in how people use it and how it looks)?
- 4) How do you feel about the space now?
- 5) Find a partner for Reflection. Share with them: How did it feel to make? What was it like to see others work?

*IF TIME:*

Choose a few and make with our bodies- 1<sup>st</sup> tableau style, then w/ water flowing action.

**IV CLEAN UP! (5-10 Mins)**

- 1) Disassemble fountains, putting materials back

Rooftop School / JMCA Institute Program / Session #7  
Ms. Callaway's/ Ms. Beaulieu's 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Class  
Wednesday, March 10, 2004

LOI: *How is the transformation of the ordinary present in Ruth Asawa's work?*

MATERIALS: Mesh material / metal strips / butcher paper / pens

-----

**I FOUNTAIN REFLECTION (10 Mins)**

- 1) Think about what you SAW, HEARD, THOUGHT and FELT when you saw the fountains
- 2) Write it on the butcher paper
- 3) Go through each category (Under SAW – have them show w/ bodies 1<sup>st</sup>, HEAR- make noise, THINK- explain, FELT- body gesture)

Write Ruth Asawa's quote on board

**II WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT ART @ RFTP (5 Mins)**

- 1) Go over quote on board – who think wrote this, talk a little about it
- 2) What have you learned about art at Rooftop? (What is your art philosophy?)
- 3) Turn & share with neighbor
- 4) Write on new piece of butcher paper – where do you want to write it on there, what color, etc?
- 5) Can choose to write it again weaving it in where you want.

**III REFLECTION ON METAL STRIPS (10 Mins)**

- 1) On metal strips choose one thing that you wrote about what you S/H/T/F and write it on your strip- feel free to decorate, use other colors, etc.
- 2) Weave that into mesh

**IV ART STATEMENT ON METAL STRIPS (10 Mins)**

- 1) On metal strip write what you've learned about art at Rooftop- feel free to decorate, use other colors, etc.
- 2) Weave that into mesh

**V SHAPING THE MESH (5 Mins)**

- 1) Brainstorm shapes in which to mold the mesh
- 2) Mold several shapes with different volunteers
- 3) Vote on shape like best

**VI WOVEN SCULPTURE PLACEMENT (5 Mins)**

- 1) Brainstorm where around campus we might place the sculpture
- 2) Write suggestions on board & vote

**VII DISCUSS CULMINATING EVENT (5 Mins)**

- 1) Describe event
- 2) Brainstorm from art they've done w/ Andi, etc –What art would you like to show?
- 3) Would like to show this woven piece? How might we share it with the school, introduce it, get their participation, etc.? Brainstorm & write suggestions.



## BOOKS RELATED TO RUTH ASAWA (Junior High, High School)

Compiled by Jill Randall

### I. Asian Culture, Origami, Internment

- A. Check out the Asia for Kids website. They sell many books related to these topics. [www.asiaforkids.com](http://www.asiaforkids.com)
- B. Generations: A Japanese American Community Portrait is a new book available. It is a photographic journal, 136 pages. You can purchase it through the Japanese Cultural and Community Center at 415-567-5505 or visit [www.jccnc.org](http://www.jccnc.org).

### II. Ruth Asawa, the Artist

- A. Ruth Asawa: A Retrospective View by Gerald Nordland
  - 1. This book is from the 70s
  - 2. Good to show your class some photos of Ruth Asawa's work
- B. Ruth Asawa's San Francisco Fountain by Sally Woodbridge
  - 1. This is the original brochure from when the Hyatt Fountain was built.
  - 2. It is from the 70s, and is about 30 pages.
  - 3. I bought a copy of it used on Amazon.com
- C. There are several articles about Ruth Asawa on the Oakland Museum website
- D. There is a one minute videoclip of Ruth Asawa speaking, on the KQED website. Go to [www.kqed.org](http://www.kqed.org) and search under "Ruth Asawa."
- E. Ruth Asawa: Of Form and Growth Video
  - 1. Julia Morgan owns this
  - 2. It is a 30 minute video

### III. Visual Perspective

- A. Zoom by Istvan Banyai (junior high, not high school)
- B. Re-Zoom by Istvan Banyai (junior high, not high school)
- C. "Powers of Ten" by Charles and Ray Eames (video)
  - 1. This was a ground-breaking video about perspective and magnitude.
  - 2. You can purchase a video, interactive CD-ROM, and book.
  - 3. Check out [www.eamesoffice.com](http://www.eamesoffice.com).

### IV. San Francisco

- A. Outdoor Sculpture in San Francisco: A Heritage of Public Art by Warren and Georgia Radford

1. This is an adult book, but has good photos of art. There is a photo of the Hyatt Fountain and of Asawa's fountain "Aurora."
2. Pages 132-135 specifically talk about Ruth Asawa.

**About "Powers of Ten" (Quote from Amazon.com):**

Charles and Ray Eames are among the finest American designers of this century. They are best known for their ground-breaking contributions to architecture, furniture design (the Eames Chair), industrial design and manufacturing, and the photographic arts.

The legacy of this husband and wife team includes more than 75 films that reflect the breadth and depth of their interests and the integrity of their vision. Volume 1 is a part of a video collection of these classic films.

"Powers of Ten" takes us on an adventure in magnitudes. Starting at a picnic by the lakeside in Chicago, this famous film transports us to the outer edges of the universe. Every ten seconds we view the starting point from ten times farther out, until our own galaxy is visible only as a speck of light among many others.

**\*\*I would definitely recommend checking at your public library first. Several of these books are out of print.**

## **“RUTH ASAWA” Family Art Workshop**

February 9, 2004 6:30pm - 8:00pm, Burnett Campus MPR

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 6:30 pm | Sign in, get some food and get comfortable<br>Handouts, arts brochures<br>Teacher summer slide show<br>Folding cranes for Nancy & Jack Mayeda  |
| 6:35 pm | Welcome<br>- About Ruth Asawa<br>- About Julia Morgan program<br>- Line of Inquiry: “How does Ruth Asawa transform the ordinary in her public art works?<br>Manipulation of materials: folding, stacking, twisting, weaving<br>Using materials in unexpected ways: Butterflies, Family Crests<br>The transformation of the environment<br>The transformation of the self and the community |
| 6:40 pm | Origami lesson: paper cup (for popcorn) and crane  |
| 6:50 pm | Baker’s dough  |
| 7:00 pm | “Ruth Asawa: Of Form and Growth” 30 minute movie   |
| 7:30 pm | Q&A  |
| 7:40 pm | Finishing up bread dough mural   |
| 7:50 pm | Arts Advocacy: Prop H and Parents for the Arts   |

## **“RUTH ASAWA” Family Art Workshop**

March 22, 2004 6:30pm - 8:00pm, Burnett Campus MPR

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 6:30 pm | Sign in, get some food and get comfortable<br>Handouts, arts brochures  |
| 6:35 pm | Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Julia Morgan at Rooftop slide show (classroom work with visiting artists, field trips to Union Square, Japantown, Oakland Museum)</li><li>- Preview of student work and Culminating Event</li><li>- About how the Julia Morgan program had school wide study from K-5</li><li>- Revealing Line of Inquiry: “How does Ruth Asawa transform the ordinary in her public art works?</li><li>- Have students discuss actions of folding, stacking, twisting, weaving</li><li>- Ruth’s role as a mother of SF public school children &amp; arts advocate</li><li>- The transformation of the self and the community – What does art mean to us? How can we share that with out community?</li></ul> |
| 6:50 pm | Creation of Paper Mural –<br><br>Discussion: How do they feel about art? Why did they attend this workshop? What would their lives be like without art? Families are encouraged to think about what they would like a viewer to know about art at Rooftop.  |
| 7:00 pm | Open play with materials (paper, markers, pastels, crayons, pencils, scissors, glue, foil, found materials, etc.)   |
| 7:40 pm | Reflection on mural – participants make observations about what they see and share their comments with others   |
| 7:50 pm | Reminder: Invitation to Culminating Event<br>Acknowledgements to First Five, Reach A Star   |



Rooftop and Julia Morgan Center for the Arts  
SPRING '04 CULMINATING EVENT

**RUTH ASAWA**  
*Transforming the Ordinary*

FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2004  
Rooftop School, Burnett Campus

**Introduction**

**Ms. Cruz's Kindergarten Class**  
The Garden as Inspiration

**Mr. Lane's & Ms. Vaughn's 1st Grade Class**  
"Fortune Teller" Folding and Making Observations

**Ms. Beaulieu's 2nd Grade Class**  
Body Weaving and Sharing of Weaving

**Ms. Callaway's 2nd Grade Class**  
Reflection Weaving and What We've Learned About Art

**Ms. Worrell's 2nd Grade Class**  
Frozen Statues and Sharing of Wire Art

**Mr. Pringle's 3rd Grade Class**  
"Folding, Twisting, Weaving, Stacking" Dance

**Ms. Toupin's 3rd Grade Class**  
Ruth Asawa — A Biography

**Ms. Henry's 5th Grade Class**

**Mr. Mattson's 5th Grade Class**  
Asawa's Art as Inspiration — Poetry and Art

**Dedication Ceremony**

**Acknowledgements**

*Spring 2004 Work of Art:* Ruth Asawa's Grand Hyatt Fountain at Union Square,  
Origami Fountains at Japantown and Tied-Wire Sculpture at the Oakland Museum

Julia Morgan Teaching Artists: Dave Maier & Rica Anderson

*On March 26, 2004, after our Culminating Event, “Transforming the Ordinary,” Rooftop parent, Wendy Hanamura had the opportunity to ask artist Ruth Asawa a few questions. We encourage you to share this conversation and her responses with your children.*

WH: I was just wondering after seeing all the kids who have responded to your work, do you have anything that you'd like to say?

RA: I think they should definitely go out to play! But it was great that they understood that (her work), but they shouldn't stop there.

AW: Oh no, they are all works in progress. We are still going!

WH: Not just kindergarteners, but first, second, third, fourth, all the way up to eighth.

RA: Yes, they should continue and then something will happen. No one knows what will happen, but it will happen. And they won't know what will happen, but something will happen. They won't know what to do, but it will appear after they have done this kind of daily work. A whole body of work will appear for them.

WH: For you, when you did the daily artwork, what happened?

RA: Well, you know, in skating, and in running and in basketball, you need the daily exercise to make it happen. And you don't know what will happen, but the practice of it will make it happen.

WH: If you could leave a legacy for the world, what would you want that legacy to be?

RA: I would want every person to look for something until they find it. And I think I am against the sacrifice that people make in prison, or in bombing, and things that are happening now are terrible things that people are put through now. And they should know that they are being influenced by other people. You know what I mean?

WH: Why do you think that art is important for young people?

RA: Because it is the one thing that is left that you can do yourself. I think that is important.

WH: What is the one thing, could you tell me?

RA: We don't know what that one thing is. But it's thought that comes... that are your own. And sometimes it's not good, but they have a chance to do it and eliminate it and go on with the next. I think that is important.

WH: Does it give you hope to see the kids dancing and drawing?

RA: Yes, and I am surprised at their poetry.

WH: Tell me, as you looked at those kids doing all of these different creative things, what was running through your mind?

RA: Well, I think that they had a split second to work on their own work. I think that's important. They have to learn a lot too. But they also have to learn how to be themselves too at the same time. They have to learn how to work. They have to learn how to play. And that's what we forget to do, is to play. And the play is new to them, and to you.

WH: What do you think is the most important thing that you have done in your life?

RA: It's important to find what you want to do. Sometimes, people do things because they have to do. And you have to learn how to do things that is your own. And sometimes it's awkward... and you make a lot of mistakes. But those mistakes will maybe someday turn into real things. It's hard to explain what creativity is.

WH: In all your life, what is the thing that has made you happiest or proudest that you've done?

RA: That the ideas have been spread around, and now you will never know the influence of how far it will go.

WH: Thank you. Thank you so much, Ruth.